IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of

Mail Stop PCT

Nobuya BANNO et al.

Attorney Docket No. 2006-0022A

Serial No. 10/564,482

Filed January 13, 2006

PRODUCTION METHOD OF Ge-ADDED Nb₃Al-BASED SUPERCONDUCTING WIRE [Corresponding to PCT/JP2004/010422 Filed July 15, 2004]

CLAIM OF PRIORITY UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 119

Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 THE COMMISSIONER IS AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE ANY DEFICIENCY IN THE FEE FOR THIS PAPER TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 23-0975.

Sir:

Applicants in the above-entitled application hereby claim the date of priority under the International Convention of Japanese Patent Application No. 2003-274858, filed July 15, 2003, as acknowledged in the Declaration of this application.

A certified copy of said Japanese Patent Application, together with a verified English translation thereof, are submitted herewith.

Respectfully submitted,

Nobuya BANNO et al.

Registration No. 25,134

Attorney for Applicants

MRD/pth Washington, D.C. 20006-1021 Telephone (202) 721-8200 Facsimile (202) 721-8250 May 3, 2006

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

PCT

NOTIFICATION CONCERNING SUBMISSION OR TRANSMITTAL OF PRIORITY DOCUMENT

(PCT Administrative Instructions, Section 411)

To

NISHIZAWA, Toshio Three F Minami Aoyama Bldg. 7F 11-1, Minami-Aoyama 6-chome Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0062 Japan

Date of mailing (day/month/year) 20 October 2004 (20.10.2004)	
Applicant's or agent's file reference 04-F-034PCT	IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION
International application No.	International filing date (day/month/year)
PCT/JP2004/010422	15 July 2004 (15.07.2004)
International publication date (day/month/year)	Priority date (day/month/year)
Not yet published	15 July 2003 (15.07.2003)

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MATERIALS SCIENCE et al

- 1. By means of this Form, which replaces any previously issued notification concerning submission or transmittal of priority documents, the applicant is hereby notified of the date of receipt by the International Bureau of the priority document(s) relating to all earlier application(s) whose priority is claimed. Unless otherwise indicated by the letters "NR", in the right-hand column or by an asterisk appearing next to a date of receipt, the priority document concerned was submitted or transmitted to the International Bureau in compliance with Rule 17.1(a) or (b).
- 2. (If applicable) The letters "NR" appearing in the right-hand column denote a priority document which, on the date of mailing of this Form, had not yet been received by the International Bureau under Rule 17.1(a) or (b). Where, under Rule 17.1(a), the priority document must be submitted by the applicant to the receiving Office or the International Bureau, but the applicant fails to submit the priority document within the applicable time limit under that Rule, the attention of the applicant is directed to Rule 17.1(c) which provides that no designated Office may disregard the priority claim concerned before giving the applicant an opportunity, upon entry into the national phase, to furnish the priority document within a time limit which is reasonable under the circumstances.
- 3. (If applicable) An asterisk(*) appearing next to a date of receipt, in the right-hand column, denotes a priority document submitted or transmitted to the International Bureau but not in compliance with Rule 17.1(a) or (b) (the priority document was received after the time limit prescribed in Rule 17.1(a) or the request to prepare and transmit the priority document was submitted to the receiving Office after the applicable time limit under Rule 17.1(b)). Even though the priority document was not furnished in compliance with Rule 17.1(a) or (b), the International Bureau will nevertheless transmit a copy of the document to the designated Offices, for their consideration. In case such a copy is not accepted by the designated Office as priority document, Rule 17.1(c) provides that no designated Office may disregard the priority claim concerned before giving the applicant an opportunity, upon entry into the national phase, to furnish the priority document within a time limit which is reasonable under the circumstances.

Priority date
Priority application No.
Country or regional Office
Of priority document
Of priority document

15 July 2003 (15.07.2003) 2003/274858 JP 02 Sept 2004 (02.09.2004)

The International Bureau of WIPO 34, chemin des Colombettes 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

Authorized officer

taïeb AKREMI (Fax 338 9090)

Telephone No. (41-22) 338 9415

日本国特許庁 JAPAN PATENT OFFICE

別紙添付の書類に記載されている事項は下記の出願書類に記載されて いる事項と同一であることを証明する。

This is to certify that the annexed is a true copy of the following application as filed ith this Office.

出願年月日 Date of Application:

2003年 7月15日

出 願 番 号 Application Number:

特願2003-274858

ST. 10/C]:

[JP2003-274858]

願 人 pplicant(s):

独立行政法人物質·材料研究機構

CERTIFIED COPY OF PRIORITY DOCUMENT

特許庁長官 Commissioner, Japan Patent Office 2004年 7月28日





ページ: 1/E

独立

独立

【書類名】

特許願

【整理番号】

03-MS-54

【提出日】

平成15年 7月15日

【あて先】

特許庁長官 殿

【国際特許分類】

H01B 13/00563

【発明者】

【住所又は居所】

茨城県つくば市千現一丁目2番1号

行政法人物質·材料研究機構内

【氏名】

伴野 信哉

【発明者】

【住所又は居所】

茨城県つくば市千現一丁目2番1号

行政法人物質·材料研究機構内

【氏名】

竹内 孝夫

【特許出願人】

【識別番号】

301023238

【氏名又は名称】

独立行政法人物質·材料研究機構

【代表者】 岸 輝雄

【提出物件の目録】

【物件名】

特許請求の範囲 1

【物件名】

明細書 1

【物件名】

図面 1

【物件名】

要約書 1

【書類名】特許請求の範囲

【請求項1】

 $15at\%\sim40at\%$ の $Geを含むAl合金芯が、Nbマトリクス中に芯径<math>2\mu$ m~ 20μ mで複数配置された複合多芯線材に、1300C~1600Cの温度範囲に5時間以上保持する熱処理を行い、次いで650C~900Cの温度範囲で追加熱処理することを特徴とするGeを添加 Nb_3Al 基超伝導線材の製造方法。

【書類名】明細書

【発明の名称】 Ge添加Nb3Al基超伝導線材の製造方法

【技術分野】

[0001]

この出願の発明は、Ge添加Nb3Al基超伝導線材の製造方法に関するものである。 【背景技術】

[00002]

Ge添加Nb3Al基超伝導線材は、上部臨界磁場が、実用化されているNb3Sn線材よりもはるかに高いため、21T以上で使用可能な強磁場用線材として期待されている。

[0003]

Nb3Al基超伝導線材の作製については、NbとAl若しくはAl合金とを直接拡散させる方法が一般的であり、単純に高温で熱処理しても高い臨界磁場が得られる。だが、そのような高温での熱処理により結晶粒が粗大化し、実用上必要とされる臨界電流密度は得られない。また、実用的な強磁場マグネットには、クエンチ保護等の観点から高い輸送電流が要求されるため、実用的な線材としては、高い臨界電流だけでなく、高い輸送電流が必要不可欠となる。

[0004]

そこで、Geを添加した Nb_3Al 基超伝導線材の特性を改善するために、以下の二通りの考えがこれまでにあった。

[0005]

一つは、結晶粒の粗大化を抑制するために低温熱処理とし、そうしながらも、超伝導相であるA15相の化学量論性を改善することができるように、NbとA1合金の拡散対、すなわちA1合金芯のサイズをできる限り小さく、たとえば1 μ m以下にして、中間化合物である σ 相を不安定化させる方法である(たとえば、特許文献1参照)。

[0006]

もう一つは、化学量論組成のA 1 5 相が安定となる高温にごく短時間保持し、必要に応じて急冷することにより結晶粒の粗大化を抑制する方法である(たとえば、特許文献 2 参照)。この方法においても、N b と A 1 の拡散対のサイズは小さくすることが望ましいとされている。ごく短時間のうちにN b と A 1 を反応させるためというのがその理由である

[0007]

このように、従来では、NbとAlの拡散対のサイズはできる限り小さくする必要があると考えられていた。

【特許文献1】特開平5-54739号公報

【特許文献2】特開2001-52546号公報

【発明の開示】

【発明が解決しようとする課題】

[0008]

しかしながら、Nb-Al-Ge複合材の加工性は著しく低く、前駆体線材中に微細なNbとAl合金の拡散対を作り込むのは非常に難しい。特性を十分に改善させるのに必要な量のGeを含むAlの溶解材は、典型的な共晶組織を示し、わずかな加工でも亀裂が入るほど加工が難しいのである。

[0009]

したがって、従来のNbとAl合金の拡散対を微細化するという考えでは、実用的な線材を作製するのは困難な状況にある。

[0010]

この出願の発明は、以上のとおりの事情に鑑みてなされたものであり、21 T以上の磁界領域において、臨界電流密度、輸送電流がともに高く、実用的な強磁場用のGe添加Nb3Al基超伝導線材を実現することのできるGe添加Nb3Al基超伝導線材の製造方法を提供することを解決すべき課題としている。

【課題を解決するための手段】

[0011]

この出願の発明は、上記の課題を解決するものとして、 $15at\%\sim40at\%$ のGeを含むA1合金芯が、 $Nbマトリクス中に芯径<math>2\mu m\sim20\mu m$ で複数配置された複合多芯線材に、1300C ~1600 Cの温度範囲に5時間以上保持する熱処理を行い、次いで650C ~900 Cの温度範囲で追加熱処理することを特徴とするGe添加 Nb_3AI 基超伝導線材の製造方法を提供する。

【発明の効果】

[0012]

この出願の発明のGe添加Nb3Al基超伝導線材の製造方法によって、21T以上の 高磁界領域において、高い臨界電流密度に加え、高い輸送電流が得られる強磁場用のGe 添加Nb3Al基超伝導線材が実現される。

【発明を実施するための最良の形態】

[0013]

この出願の発明のGe添加Nb3Al基超伝導線材の製造方法は、Al合金芯の芯径、 すなわち拡散対のサイズを大きくし、比較的高い温度で長時間熱処理するという従来とは 逆の発想に基づいている。

[0014]

これまで、1300 C以上の温度で、かつ保持時間 5 時間以上の熱処理を行えば、結晶粒が粗大化し、高い臨界電流密度を得ることは難しいと考えられていた。ところが、15at%~40at%のGeを含むAl 合金芯のNb マトリクスにおける芯径を 2μ m~ 20μ mに増加させ、1300 C~1600 Cの温度範囲に 5 時間以上保持する熱処理を行うことにより、21 T以上の高磁界領域において臨界電流密度が著しく向上するピーク効果が安定して得られ、高磁界領域で特化した Ge 派加 Nb_3 Al 基超伝導線材が得られることが判明した。そして、1300 C~1600 Cの温度範囲に 5 時間以上保持した後、650 C~900 Cの温度範囲で追加熱処理を行うことにより、超伝導相である Al 5 相の配列が秩序を持ち、臨界電流密度の大きさが、4.2 K、21 T cold told N cold told T cold

[0015]

また、この出願の発明のGe添加Nb3Al基超伝導線材の製造方法では、速い冷却速度は必ずしも必要でなく、このため、線材断面積を比較的容易に増加することができ、これにより、高い輸送電流が得られる。その上、急冷を必要としないことから、熱処理前に前駆体線材をコイル形状に巻いた後熱処理する、実用的なコイルの製造方法であるwind & react法の適用が可能ともなる。

$[0\ 0\ 1\ 6\]$

この出願の発明のGe添加Nb3Al基超伝導線材の製造方法では、Al合金中のGe 濃度は15at%~40at%としている。Geの濃度がこの範囲内にあれば、Nb3A l基超伝導線材の高磁場特性及び臨界温度が改善され、また、伸線加工する上で重要なA l合金芯とNbとの硬さのバランスをとることができる。

[0017]

Al合金芯の芯径は 2μ m ~ 20μ m である。芯径が 2μ m 未満では臨界電流密度が減少し、 20μ m を超えると、熱処理により正方晶化合物の体積が増大し、臨界電流密度が減少するためである。

[0018]

熱処理温度は1300℃~1600℃の範囲である。1300℃未満であると、超伝導相であるA15相の化学量論性が著しく低下し、1600℃を超えると、長時間の熱処理により結晶粒が粗大化し、低磁界側の臨界電流密度が著しく低下することになる。

[0019]

熱処理時間は5時間以上である。これは、A15相の均質化を図るためである。

[0020]

以下実施例を示し、この出願の発明のGe添加Nb3Al基超伝導線材の製造方法についてさらに詳しく説明する。

【実施例1】

[0021]

外径 $2.0\,\mathrm{mm}$ 、内径 $1.8\,\mathrm{mm}$ のN b パイプの中にA $1.8\,\mathrm{m}$ 表と Ge 粉末を原子比で 3:1 の割合で充填し、溝ロール及びカセットローラーダイスを使用して外径約 $4.2\,\mathrm{mm}$ の複合材を作製した。この複合材 $7\,\mathrm{a}$ 本を $7\,\mathrm{t}$ のN b ロッド内に挿入し、外径約 $0.87\,\mathrm{mm}$ にまで伸線した。この時点でのN b マトリクス、A 1-Ge 合金芯のビッカース硬度は、それぞれ、 $110\,\mathrm{kgf}$ /mm²、 $105\,\mathrm{kgf}$ /mm² であり、硬さにバランスがとれていた。そして、複合線材 $241\,\mathrm{a}$ を外径 $2.0\,\mathrm{mm}$ 、内径 $1.6\,\mathrm{mm}$ のN b パイプに挿入して伸線し、最終的に外径 $0.87\,\mathrm{mm}$ ϕ 、A 1-Ge 合金芯数が $7\times241\,\mathrm{a}$ 、A 1-Ge 合金芯の芯径が約 $8\,\mu$ m である N b $2.6\,\mathrm{mm}$ 人 $2.6\,\mathrm{mm}$ 対を有する長尺の複合多芯線材を作製した。その断面の写真を示したのが図 $2.6\,\mathrm{mm}$ である。この複合多芯線材を圧延加工し、A $2.6\,\mathrm{mm}$ の管囲に収まる複数本のテープを作製した。

[0022]

このテープに対し、1400℃で1時間~10時間の熱処理を行った。テープの横断面には、図2に示したような微細組織が形成された。横幅は0.24mmである。EDX測定及びX線回折測定から、図2図中の白い部分がA15超伝導相であり、黒い部分が正方晶化合物相であることが確認された。

[0023]

 $A \ I - G \ e$ 合金芯の芯径が約 8 μ mであるテープを1400 $\mathbb C$ で 7 時間熱処理した直後の臨界温度 T_c は17.7 K であり、超伝導相が形成されていることが確認された。このテープをその後800 $\mathbb C$ で 1 0 時間追加熱処理すると、 T_c は18.1 K に上がった。 $A \ 1 \ 5$ 相の結晶の規則性が改善されたためと考えられる。

[0024]

[0025]

図 5 は、1400 で 7 時間熱処理し、次いで800 で 1 0 時間追加熱処理した、A 1 - G e 合金芯の芯径が 8 μ m であるテープの J c の磁界依存性を示したグラフである。 J_c が高磁界側で大きくなるピーク効果が現れている。 J_c は、4.2 K、2 1 T において300 A m^2 、2 2 T において265 A m^2 という値が得られた。熱処理温度を1200 でにした場合には、1 7 T でも 3 0 A m^2 程度の値しか得られず、さらに高磁界とすると特性はより低下した。

【実施例2】

[0026]

実施例1と同様にして、外径約2 mm、Al-Ge合金芯数が7×241×15本、Al-Ge合金芯の芯径が約4μmの複合多芯線材を作製した。この複合多芯線材に対し、1400℃で7時間の熱処理を行い、次いで800℃で10時間の追加熱処理を行った。その結果、21Tにおける臨界電流が300Aを超えた。

[0027]

以上の実施例1及び実施例2から、高い臨界電流密度だけでなく、高い臨界電流を示す Ge添加Nb3Al基超伝導線材が作製可能であることが確認された。

[0028]

もちろん、この出願の発明は、以上の実施例によって限定されるものではない。細部に

ついては様々な態様が可能であることはいうまでもない。

【産業上の利用可能性】

[0029]

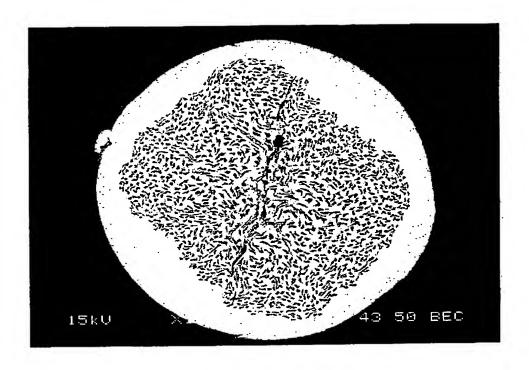
この出願の発明のGe添加Nb3Al基超伝導線材の製造方法により製造されるGe添加Nb3Al基超伝導線材は、2lT以上の高磁界領域における臨界電流密度、輸送電流がともに高いため、従来では到達し得なかった高磁場を発生するマグネットが実現可能となる。NMRマグネットの強磁場化や物性用の汎用高磁場マグネットの強磁場化・コンパクト化が図られる。

【図面の簡単な説明】

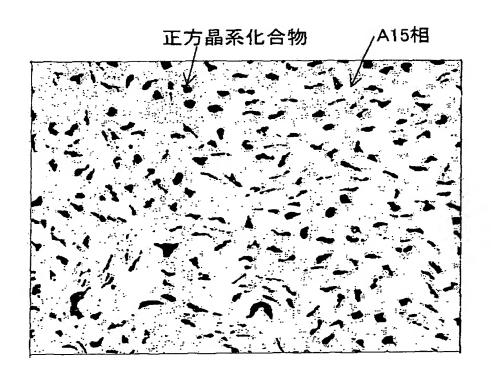
[0030]

- 【図1】実施例1で作製した複合多芯線材の断面の写真である。
- 【図2】実施例1で作製したテープの熱処理後の横断面を示した写真である。
- 【図3】実施例1における臨界温度 T_c のAl-Ge合金芯径依存性を示したグラフである。
- 【図4】実施例1における臨界電流密度 J_c のAl-Ge合金芯径依存性を示したグラフである。
- 【図5】実施例1における臨界電流密度Jcの磁界依存性を示したグラフである。

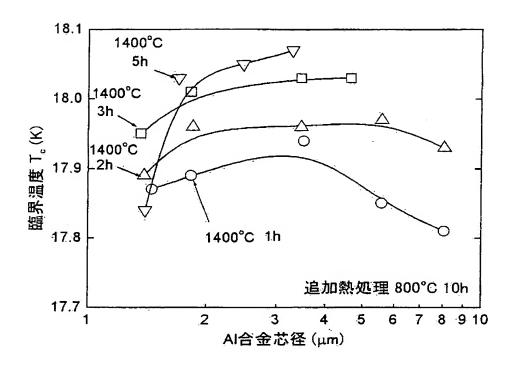
【書類名】図面【図1】



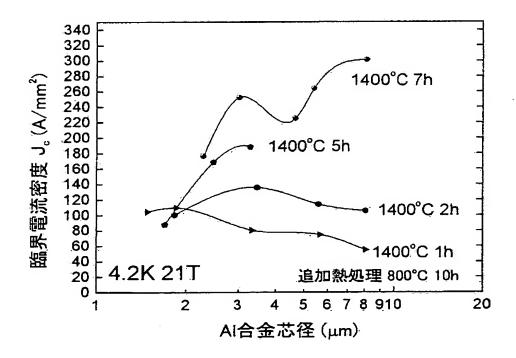
【図2】



【図3】

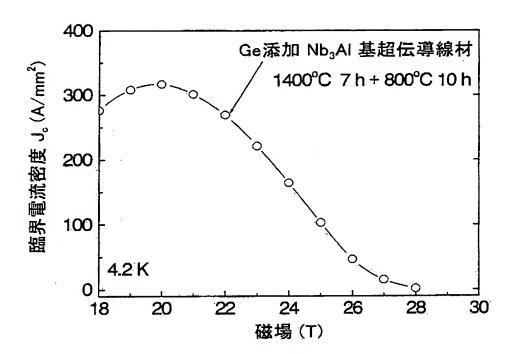


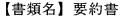
【図4】



3/E

【図5】





【要約】

【課題】21 T以上の磁界領域において、臨界電流密度、輸送電流がともに高く、実用的な強磁場用のGe添加Nb3Al基超伝導線材を実現する。

【解決手段】 $15 a t \% \sim 40 a t \% o G e を含む A 1 合金芯が、N b マトリクス中に芯径 <math>2 \mu m \sim 20 \mu m$ で複数配置された複合多芯線材に、 $1300 \mathbb{C} \sim 1600 \mathbb{C}$ の温度範囲に 5 時間以上保持する熱処理を行い、次いで $650 \mathbb{C} \sim 900 \mathbb{C}$ の温度範囲で追加熱処理する。

【選択図】図5



特願2003-274858

出願人履歴情報

識別番号

[301023238]

1. 変更年月日

2001年 4月 2日

[変更理由]

新規登録

住 所 氏 名 茨城県つくば市千現一丁目2番1号

VERIFICATION OF TRANSLATION

I, Toshio NISHIZAWA, a citizen of Japan, residing at THREE F MINAMI AOYAMA BLDG. 7F, 6-11-1, MINAMI-AOYAMA, MINATO-KU, TOKYO JAPAN, am the translator of Japanese Patent Application No. 274858/2003 and I state that the following is a true translation to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed this 20th day of April, 2006

Toshio NISHIZAWA

PATENT OFFICE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT

This is to certify that the annexed is a true copy of the following application as filed with this Office.

Date of Application: July 15, 2003

Patent Application Number: 2003-274858

Applicant(s): NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MATERIALS

SCIENCE

July 28, 2004

Hiroshi OGAWA

Commissioner, Patent Office

Issued Number: 2004-3066267

(Translation)

[Name of the Documents]

Application for Patent

[Reference Number]

03-MS-54

[Filing Date]

July 15, 2003

[To]

Director-General of Patent Office

[International Patent Classification]

H01B 13/00563

[Inventor]

[Address or Residence]

c/o National Institute for Materials

Science, 2-1, Sengen 1-chome,

Tsukuba-shi, Ibaraki, JAPAN

[Name]

Nobuya BANNO

[Inventor]

[Address or Residence]

c/o National Institute for Materials

Science, 2-1, Sengen 1-chome,

Tsukuba-shi, Ibaraki, JAPAN

[Name]

Takao TAKEUCHI

[Applicant]

[Identification Number]

301023238

[Name or Designation]

National Institute for Materials Science

[Representative]

Teruo KISHI

[List of Appended Documents]

[Name of The Document]

Claims

1 copy

[Name of The Document]

Specification

1 copy

[Name of The Document]

Drawings

1 copy

[Name of The Document]

Abstract

1 copy

[Title of the document] Claims

[Claim 1]

A method of producing a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire comprising the steps of preparing a composite multi-core wire in which a plurality of Al alloy wires containing 15 at% to 40 at% of Ge are arranged in Nb matrix at a core diameter of 2 μ m to 20 μ m; heating for at least five hours at a temperature ranging from 1300°C to 1600°C; and additionally heating at a temperature ranging from 650°C to 900°C.

[Title of the document] Specification

[Name of the invention] PRODUCTION METHOD OF Ge-ADDED Nb $_3$ Al-BASED

SUPERCONDUCTING WIRE

[Technical Field]

[0001]

The present invention relates to a method of producing a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire.

[Background Art]

[0002]

Great expectations have risen for application of a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire as a wire which can be used in strong magnetic fields of 21T or higher because it has higher upper critical magnetic field than practically used Nb₃Sn superconducting wires.

[0003]

As to production method of a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire, it is general to directly diffuse Nb together with Al or Al alloy, and high critical magnetic field can be obtained by simply heating at elevated temperatures. However, such heat treatment at elevated temperatures makes resultant crystal particles bulky, and critical current density practically required cannot be realized. Furthermore, since a practical strong magnetic field magnet is requested to realize high transport current from the view point of protection from quenching or the like, a practical wire should essentially have not only high critical current density but also high transport current.

[0004]

For improving characteristics of a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire, two approaches have been proposed heretofore.

[0005]

In the first approach, heat treatment is conducted at low temperature so as to prevent

crystal particles from becoming bulky, while a diffusing pair of Nb and Al alloy, namely the size of alloy core is reduced as small as possible, for example, less than or equal to 1 μ m to destabilize σ phase which is an intermediate compound, in order to improve the stoichiometry of an Al5 phase which is a superconducting phase (refer to Patent document No. 1). [0006]

In the second approach, crystal particles are prevented from becoming bulky through short retention at an elevated temperature at which the Al5 phase of stoichiometric composition is stable, followed by quenching if necessary(refer to Patent document No.2). Also in this approach, it is preferred to reduce the size of the diffusing pair of Nb and Al. This allows Nb and Al to react in a very short time.

[0007]

As described above, in the conventional techniques, it is believed that the size of the diffusing pair of Nb and Al should be as small as possible.

[Patent document No. 1] Japanese Patent Publication No. 54739/93

[Patent document No. 2] Japanese Patent Publication No. 52546/01

[Disclosure of the invention]

[Problems to be solved by the invention]

[0008]

However, workability of Nb-Al-Ge composite material is very poor, and it is very difficult to incorporate a diffusing pair of fine Nb and Al alloy in a precursor wire. An Al-dissolved material containing an amount of Ge required to sufficiently improve characteristics exhibits a typical eutectic structure, and is so difficult to be processed that a small work may cause a crack.

[0009]

Therefore, it is the current state of the art that manufacture of a practical wire is difficult in the conventional approach of reducing the size of the diffusing pair of Nb and Al alloy.

[0010]

The present invention was devised in consideration of the above circumstance, and it is an object of the present invention to provide a method of producing a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire capable of realizing a practical Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire for use in strong magnetic fields having high critical current density and transport current in magnetic field regions of 21T or higher.

[Means for solving the problems]

[0011]

In order to solve the above problems, the present invention provides a method of producing a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire comprising the steps of preparing a composite multi-core wire in which a plurality of Al alloy cores containing 15 at% to 40 at% of Ge are arranged in Nb matrix at a core diameter of 2 μ m to 20 μ m; heating for at least five hours at a temperature ranging from 1300°C to 1600°C; and additionally heating at a temperature ranging from 650°C to 900°C.

[Effects of the invention]

[0012]

According to the method of producing a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire of the present invention, it is possible to realize a practical Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire for strong magnetic fields having high critical current density and transport current in magnetic field regions of 21T or higher.

(Best mode for carrying out the invention)

[0013]

The method of producing a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire of the present invention is based on an opposite idea to the conventional idea that the core diameter of Al alloy core, namely the size of diffusing pair is increased, and heat treatment is conducted at a relatively high temperature for a long time.

[0014]

Heretofore, it has been considered that heat treatment at not less than 1300°C for a retention time of at least five hours makes crystal particles bulky, making it difficult to obtain high critical current density. When the core diameter in Nb matrix of the Al alloy core containing 15 at% to 40 at% of Ge was increased in the range of 2 μm and 20 μm, and heat treatment was conducted in the temperature range of 1300°C to 1600°C with a retention time of at least five hours, it was proved to be possible to stably obtain a peak effect that critical current density significantly increases in high magnetic field region of 21T or higher, and a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire specialized in high magnetic current density was obtained. And by additionally heating at a temperature ranging from 650°C to 900°C after heating at a temperature ranging from 1300°C to 1600°C with a retention time of at least five hours, the Al5 phase which is a superconducting phase is atomically ordered and the intensity of critical current density becomes 300A/mm² at 4.2K and 21T, and 265A/mm² at 22T. These values are much larger than values for Nb₃Sn superconducting wires now practically available.

[0015]

Furthermore, in the method of producing a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire according to the present invention, the high cooling speed is not always necessary so that it is possible to increase cross section area of a wire relatively easily and thus is able to obtain high transport current. Additionally, since quenching is no longer necessary, it becomes possible to employ "wind&react method" which is a practical production method of coil in which heating is conducted after winding a precursor wire in coil form.

[0016]

In the method of producing a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire according to the present invention, Ge concentration in Al alloy is specified in the range of 15 at% to 40 at%. When concentration of Ge falls within this range, high magnetic field characteristic and critical temperature of the Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire are improved, and a balance in hardness is achieved between Al alloy core and Nb which is critical in wire-drawing process.

[0017]

Core diameter of Al alloy core is in the range of 2 μ m to 20 μ m. This is because if the core diameter is less than 2 μ m, the critical current density decreases, while if the core diameter is more than 20 μ m, volume of tetragonal compound increases due to heat treatment and critical current density decreases.

[0018]

The temperature of heat treatment ranges from 1300°C to 1600°C. At temperatures less than 1300°C, stoichiometry of the Al5 phase which is a superconducting phase significantly decreases, whereas at temperatures more than 1600°C, crystal particles become bulky due to long-time heat treatment so that critical current density on the side of low magnetic field significantly decreases.

[0019]

The heat treatment time is at least five hours. This is for achieving homogenization of the Al5 phase.

[0020]

In the following, the method of producing a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire of the present invention will be explained in more detail by way of examples.

[Example 1]

[0021]

A Nb pipe having an outer diameter of 20 mm and an inner diameter of 18 mm was charged with Al powders and Ge powers in an atomic ratio of 3:1, and a composite material having an outer diameter of about 4.2 mm was prepared using a groove roller and a cassette roller dice. Seven pieces of the composite material were inserted into 7-core Nb rod, and subjected to wire-drawing to about 0.87 mm in outer diameter. Vickers hardness of the Nb matrix and the Al-Ge alloy core at this time were respectively 110 kgf/mm² and 105 kgf/mm², so that balance in hardness was achieved. Then, 241 of the composite wire were inserted into a Nb pipe having an outer diameter of 20 mm and an inner diameter of 16 mm and the composite material wire was drawn to finally obtain an elongated composite multi-core wire

having Nb/Al-Ge diffusion pairs in which an outer diameter is 0.87 mm ϕ , the number of Al-Ge alloy core is 7x241, a core diameter of Al-Ge alloy core is about 8 μ m. Fig. 1 is a photograph of a cross section of the elongated composite multi-core wire. This composite multi-core wire was subjected to rolling to obtain a plurality of tapes in which a core diameter of Al-Ge alloy core falls within the range of about 1 μ m to 8 μ m.

[0022]

Next the resultant tape was subjected to heat treatment at 1400°C for 1 to 10 hours. A fine structure shown in Fig. 2 was formed in a traverse section. The window width was 0.24 mm. EDX measurement and X-ray diffraction measurement revealed that the white part in Fig. 2 was an Al5 superconducting phase and the black part was a tetragonal compound phase.

[0023]

A critical temperature T_c directly after heating the tape having a core diameter of Al-Ge alloy core of about 8 μm at 1400°C for 7 hours was 17.7 K, and formation of superconducting phase was observed. As a result of additional heating of the tape at 800°C for 10 hours, T_c was rose to 18.1 K. This may be ascribed to improvement in atomic order of crystals of the Al5 phase.

[0024]

Fig. 3 is a graph showing dependency of T_c on Al-Ge alloy core diameter in the tapes after additional heating. As can be see from Fig. 3, in order to raise T_c , it is necessary to select the core diameter of Al-Ge alloy core at 2 μm or more. Furthermore, Fig. 3 shows that the heat treatment time should be at least five hours. Fig. 4 is a graph showing dependency of critical current density J_c on core diameter. As can be seen from Fig. 4, in order to obtain excellent J_c as well as T_c , it is necessary to select the core diameter of Al-Ge alloy core at 2 μm or more, and the heat treatment time should be at least five hours.

[0025]

Fig. 5 is a graph showing dependency of of J_c on magnetic field of the tape having subjected to heat treatment at 1400°C for 7 hours followed by additional heat treatment at

 800° C for 10 hours and having a core diameter of Al-Ge alloy core of 8 μ m. A peak effect that J_c is larger on the high magnetic field side was observed. J_c was 300A/mm^2 at 4.2 K and 21T, and 265A/mm^2 at 22T. When the temperature of heat treatment was 1200° C, about 30A/mm^2 at most was obtained even at 17T, and on the further higher magnetic fields, the characteristics were much deteriorated.

[Example 2]

[0026]

As is the same with Example 1, a composite multi-core wire having an outer diameter of about 2 mm, the number of Al-Ge alloy core of 7x241x15 and a core diameter of Al-Ge alloy core of about 4 µm was prepared. This composite multi-core wire was subjected to heat treatment at 1400°C for 7 hours, followed by additional heat treatment at 800°C for 10 hours. As a result, a critical current at 21T exceeded 300A.

[0027]

From the Examples 1 and 2, it was confirmed that a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire exhibiting not only high critical current density but also high critical current can be prepared.

[0028]

Of course, the present invention is not limited to examples as described above. It goes without saying that as to the details, various forms are acceptable.

[Industrial Applicability]

[0029]

A Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire produced by the method of producing a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire of the present invention exhibits high critical current density and high transport current in high magnetic field region of 21T or higher, making it possible to realize a magnet generating such a high magnetic filed that can never be achieved in conventional techniques. Stronger magnetic field of NMR magnet will be promoted. Stronger magnetic field of a multi-purpose high magnetic field magnet for physical

property and the multi-purpose high magnetic field magnet with compact size will be promoted.

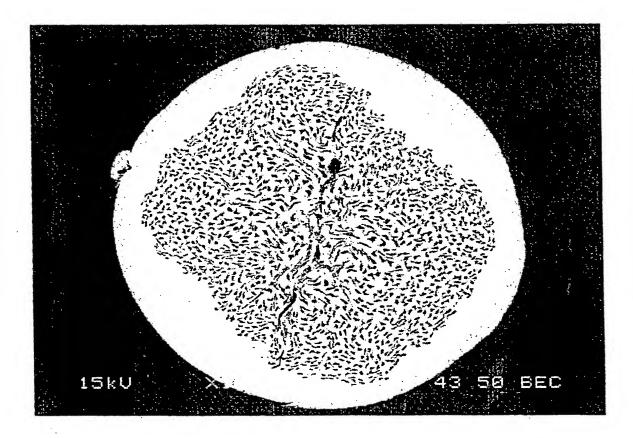
[Brief Description of Drawings]

[0030]

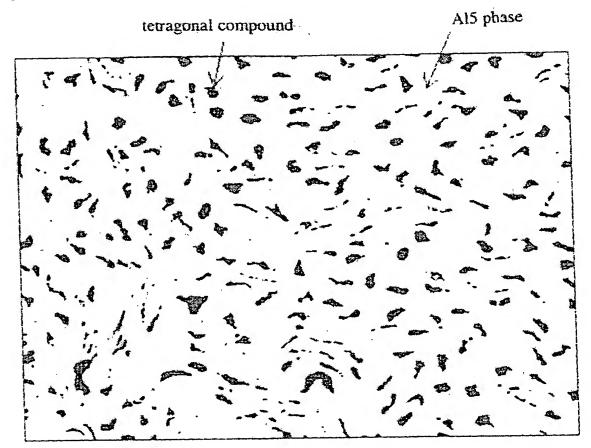
- [Fig. 1] Fig. 1 is a photograph of a cross section of a composite multi-core wire produced in Example 1.
- [Fig. 2] Fig. 2 is a photograph of a traverse section of a tape produced in Example 1 after heat treatment.
- [Fig. 3] Fig. 3 is a graph showing dependency of critical temperature T_c on core diameter of Al-Ge alloy in Example 1.
- [Fig. 4] Fig. 4 is a graphs showing dependency of critical current density J_c on core diameter of Al-Ge alloy in Example 1.
- [Fig. 5] Fig. 5 is a graph showing dependency of critical current density J_c on magnetic field in Example 1.

[Title of the document] Drawings

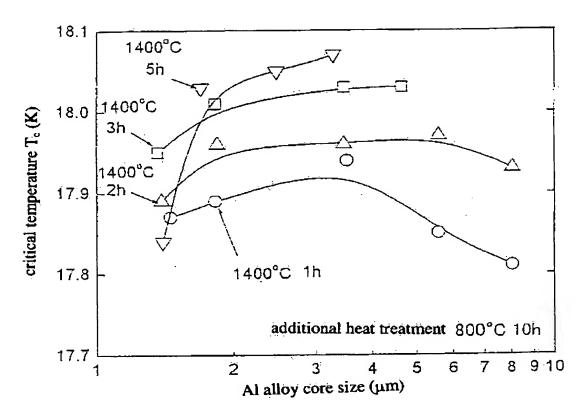
[Fig.1]



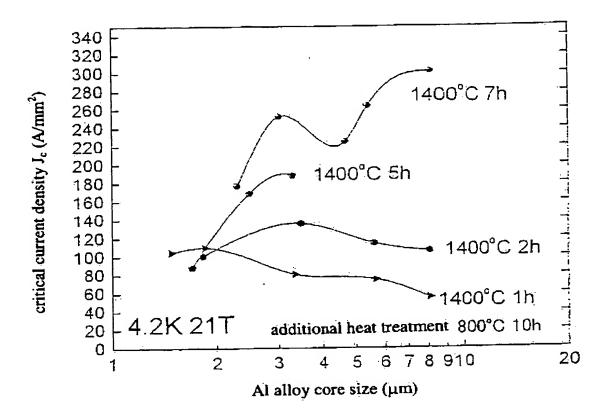
[Fig. 2]



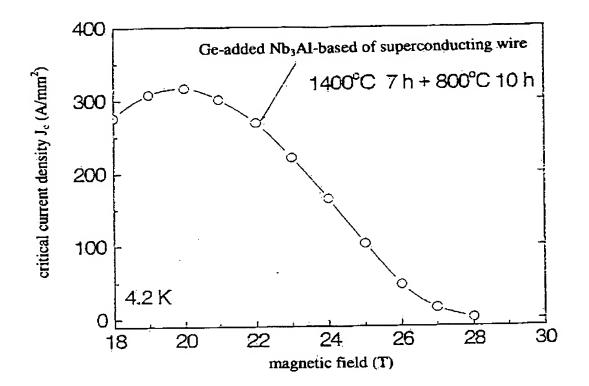
[Fig. 3]



[Fig. 4]



[Fig. 5]



[Title of the document] Abstract

[Abstract]

[Problems] Realization of a Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire capable of realizing a practical Ge-added Nb₃Al-based superconducting wire for use in strong magnetic fields having high critical current density and transport current in magnetic field regions of 21T or higher.

[Solving means] A composite multi-core wire rod in which a plurality of Al alloy wires containing 15 at% to 40 at% of Ge are arranged in Nb matrix at a core diameter of 2 µm to 20 µm is subjected to heating for at least five hours at a temperature ranging from 1300°C to 1600°C; and additionally heating at a temperature ranging from 650°C to 900°C.

[Selected drawing] Fig. 5

This Page is Inserted by IFW Indexing and Scanning Operations and is not part of the Official Record

BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES

Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

Defects in the images include but are not limited to the items checked:	
☐ BLACK BORDERS	
☐ IMAGE CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES	
☐ FADED TEXT OR DRAWING	
☐ BLURRED OR ILLEGIBLE TEXT OR DRAWING	
☐ SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES	
COLOR OR BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS	
GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS	
☐ LINES OR MARKS ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT	
☐ REFERENCE(S) OR EXHIBIT(S) SUBMITTED ARE POOR QUALITY	
Потибр.	

IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.

As rescanning these documents will not correct the image problems checked, please do not report these problems to the IFW Image Problem Mailbox.